know what he meant. She stopped as she was sorting the letters and engineers' reports, that Friday at dusk, and stared out between the heavy curtains down the sweep of white lawn to the white city street. And then, silently and motionless, with documents slipping from her relaxing fingers, she failed to see that it had stopped snowing and that the storm had passed; she failed to hear the scrape of the first snow-shovels; she failed to smell the wisp of birch smoke that had strayed from the open fireplace and invaded the luxurious library as fearlessly as it would invade the kitchen of a farm-house. Forgive her! For this was the first time in her life she had ever wondered how her "biography" would look in print.

She smiled as she thought of it:

Miss Amy Andrew, born Cleveland, Ohio, 1888. Parents, Amy (Mattou), deceased 1910, and Henry Arden Andrew. Lived Cleveland, Cincinnati, Minneapolis, Terre Haute, 1888-1905. Education, public schools. Stenographer, 1905-1910, supporting self and mother. Attended State University at own expense, 1911-1913. Secretary Jaffrey Duncan, Esq., Midland Ore & Iron Company, 1913-. Unmarried.

This biography, however, said nothing of the real struggle, of the wonderful, ever-blooming health that had allowed her to keep fighting. It did not tell of her contribution to the last years of a deserted mother, whose spirit had been crushed, and whose body drooped in a gloomy harmony with the spirit, until both reached the end. It did not tell of the fight for education, and then of the painful and ever-growing belief in a childless life. It did not tell of a fear that any man who would want her she would not want, and that any man she would want she could not have. Then,—was it forty-eight or forty-nine days ago?—in spite of all her assuredness that no such joy was in the world, Jaffrey had said it to her—had said, "I love you"; had interpreted his own affectionate tenderness which she had not dared to interpret to herself. Amy was happy now. Even the Duncans had grown happy with her. They could not shed from themselves the happiness she and Jaffrey spread about from the tops of their full measures. There had been days and days of it!

The inside man of the Duncans interrupted her dusk dream by slipping into the room with the characteristic stealth of old and formal English servants; he poked the embers, put on another log, and was gone.

LESS than three minutes later, there came to her ears the soft tapping of a knuckle upon the private side entrance to the Duncan library.

Any one who is familiar with the Duncan house—which, though in the region upon which the downtown district is now encroaching, is still one of the most dignified in the city—will remember how far back from the street is the columned portico, and will recall that two long stone-paved walks lead up to the house. The middle walk takes one to the wide social entrance; the narrower way has its terminus at a ground-glass door of the elder Duncan's library. Upon this glass one inside may see the shadow of any visitor without.

By day the shadow may be thrown by the sun; by night an arc light on the street casts the image. And therefore, after Amy had glanced out of the window at the single tracks along the narrow, obliterated walk, and on the otherwise inviolated carpet of snow, she turned toward that door again.

The shadow was unpleasant. It came and went, growing clearer and then fading away, as if the thing outside were half real, half ghostly. The shadow was grotesque; it outlined a menace. The air of the library seemed to stir with sudden unrest.

The girl, whether or not she felt intuitive fears, had the fixed custom of suppressing them. She walked quickly to the door and opened it.

In the deep, drifted snow on the step stood a man with sloping shoulders.

He shivered. He was one of those individuals who, growing old, droop all over, face and figure, hair and hands. He drooped so impressively that his clothes, which were absurdly striving for smartness, made game of his age.

"Come in," said Amy.

The man, with his watery blue eyes fixed upon hers, sidled into the room and toward the blaze on the hearth, just as a vagrant dog is drawn by the warmth of a hearth on which he does not belong. He left behind him a faint odor of cloves. He was the embodiment of failure, the symbol of unhallowed male maturity.

"It's this way," he said. "The office was closed. I went there to find out about a Miss Amy Andrew—about where she boarded and so on. Then I thought I'd walk up and ask here. I've come from a long way."

Amy caught her breath. There was not light enough in the dusk and from the one shaded table lamp to disclose the pallor that swept over her face. She held her hands at her sides, tightly clenched. She knew, as if by a long prepared instinct. The man was her father.

A thought so clear in terms of words that it might have been an audible voice said to her: "He has come back. He crushed your mother's happiness by leaving her twenty years ago; he has returned to crush yours." By startling flashes of realization, clear lights were thrown upon the terrible havoc he could work upon the pride of the Duncan family, and upon the future, not only of herself, but of Jaffrey.

She shut her teeth; without opening them, she said slowly and without a tremor in her voice: "Why do you want to see her?"

"Now, I'll tell you about that," he began, somewhat startled, and stepped forward into the circle of light.

She could see him more clearly. Upon his face was written the story of his life—that weak and futile life, the premature old age, the self-indulgence worn out, the eternal pretense of refinement and respectability to which practice of fraud upon himself and the world had clung, so it appeared, from first to last.

HE began again suddenly. "There's some good in every man," he said, and there he stopped again.

He wore a light brown overcoat inadequate for winter. His cuffs hung below its inadequate sleeves; they had been trimmed at the edge, as if the scissors had been called upon to supplant the laundry. He wore a gay tie. He had made himself presentable according to his lights and his means.

"Well, I suppose you know Amy Andrew," he said. "You know the life she leads. And you can help me a lot. I'm a stranger."

He sniffed, but it might have been the effect of the cold air from which he had come shivering.

"I—I am her father," he said.

The girl showed no surprise. If she feared that his voice might carry out into the hall, where at any moment members of the family might arrive, she concealed her apprehension.

The only action she took was to close the heavy mahogany door. The instinct of self-preservation calmed her.

"Sit down—I am listening," said a voice; she recognized it as her own.

"I take it you're one of the Duncan family," he said, twisting his gnarled fingers. "You must have a regard for my daughter, and you look like one who's kind and good, if you'll excuse me for saying so. I appreciate refinement, so to speak. I was used to it once."

"You want to tell me a story?" asked Amy, with all the semblance of sympathy she could summon, but not without a note of impatience.

"I must," he said. "I must have advice. There's some good in every one. And it was the good in me that rose up to the surface the day I picked up an old *State Gazette* and saw my wife had gone. I was up in Calgary, and I says to myself, 'As soon as I can, I'll go back to my little daughter. She needs me.'"

He talked in a false dramatic style, and his eyes grew more watery than ever. Amy shuddered, but she said: "Yes—so you are here."

"There's some good in every one," he went on, as if repetition of that phrase would be a cause of its becoming true. "Yes, I came back. There is no use concealing anything, because I haven't anybody in the world to ask except you. I've got a question to ask you. Maybe you know—I ran away from her mother in 1893?"

Amy leaned over, thrusting the palms of her well shaped hands across the polished mahogany table-top—and her nails scratched as they moved; but she said sweetly:

"Yes, I *did* know that. I understood it that way."

"It's a terrible story," the other said, smoothing his thin gray hair. "It's a terrible thing for a man who has come from people of culture to live as I've lived, so to speak. I've been at the bottom. Poverty, sickness, disgrace—I've known 'em all. Let me tell you about that. Why, I'm a ghost, I suppose. I've been a street hawker—I've sold patent fountain-pens on the street. I suppose she would have to know; I suppose Amy would have to be told."

"No," said the girl quickly; "I wouldn't tell her if I were you. If you have been arrested and—or anything—I would not tell her. What question did you want to ask me?"

"Well, I'll tell you about that," he answered. "Just let me say first that love of one's own flesh and blood comes back to a man at last. Blood is a queer thing. It sets up a cry, sooner or later. Blood calls to us sooner or later. Why, it grips the heart, I tell you. It wakes you up in the night with a hunger and a longing for what belongs to you. And my daughter and I belong to each other. Don't we?"

She stared at him without moving her compressed lips.

"Well, I figure it so," he said at last. "I'm coming to the question. I just wanted you to know how suddenly my little Amy was the only thing left to me. She was the only hope for me. She was all that stood between me and failure—and dissolute life."

The girl recoiled at this pretense on the part of one so thoroughly beyond reconstruction that hope and youth were still his.

"I thought she and me could work out a future together. I've learned something about her since I got here. She's a fine young woman. It does my heart good—the heart of a father. It took all I could do to save enough to come, but I've had dreams. I've seen 'em over and over. I've seen a little vine-covered cottage; I've seen I could do some kind of respectable work; I've seen myself sitting beside a lamp—a home lamp—on winter evenings where it was warm, and I had my slippers on."

He paused. He sniffed again. Suddenly he exclaimed:

"My God! Do you think she'd take me? Do you think she'd be glad to see her father?"

AMY suppressed a cry of pain. She did not dare to speak. She watched the man's dry, gnarled fingers smoothing the top of a derby hat.

The man understood; his confidante was unable to answer him affirmatively.

"Well, what about human feelings?" he said, with a sigh. "What about pity? What about the ties of blood? Well, let that go. But what about woman's tenderness? What about Amy's heart?"

She shook her head slowly. For the first time her voice trembled as she said: "I do not know."

"Suppose it meant sacrifice for her," he said. "I've thought of that. Her mother was so good, so tender. It is that goodness and tenderness that has haunted me all these years. And the one thing I've kept—the one thing I never pawned in all this time—is this."

He laid down carefully on the table a little gold locket. It was a trinket shaped like a heart.

"She wore it for a long time."

"Amy's mother?" the girl asked timidly.

He nodded. "I happened—I just happened to have it in my pocket when I went away. Ain't it strange how things happen? I was going to take it to have it repaired. But I went— I've had it ever since. I gave it to her about the time Amy was born," he continued. "I said she was the dearest, tenderest, bravest, most unselfish woman in the world. I remember all those little things. And she said, with a laugh, that if our daughter grew up, and if she turned out to be all the things I thought her mother was, then some day I could give Amy the locket. Ain't it funny? Ain't it funny that I've kept this all these years! And now I've brought it to her—to Amy. That's the question I want to ask you. There's good in all of us. Well, then, what shall I do? Shall I go to her and tell her her father has come back, or shall I go away—and never come back again?"

Miss Andrew looked away from him, and around the Duncan library, as if she were about to say farewell to all its familiar objects. She reflected, as she looked, that this would make an excellent newspaper story. She felt the strength slipping out of her nerve ends. There, on the long mantel, was Jaffrey's picture. . . .

"I think you had better go away," she said fiercely.

THE man drew his face into a grotesque squinch, just as a cat shuts its eyes when meeting an oncoming blow. With both his gnarled, dry hands, he snatched at the flaps of his overcoat as one who, in sudden agony, seeks to tear his own flesh.

"You think that?" he whispered. "You think I oughter go away and never see my little girl any more?"

Amy suddenly became conscious of a need to convince him before a determination to assert himself as a father had grown stubborn. He had come from afar. He had with persistent care saved enough to come. He had spent infinite pains in his search for her. Was it likely that on the word of one person he would abandon his purpose? This man who talked about his daughter needing him—would he be able to see, through all the blindness of his desperation and self-pity and hunger for comfort, the fact that to her he would be only a parasite, a tainted old man, a burden? Would he be able to see that his coming would stain the whole life of his daughter, and perhaps wreck it?

A panic seized her, but she knew that she must mobilize all her wits.

"You said there was some good in every man," she said, leaning forward eagerly. "You said that several times. It is your own phrase."

There was a pause in which, fearing the sound of Mrs. Duncan's car or Jaffrey's key, she was conscious of her ears straining to catch every outdoor sound. If the family came, she could offer no explanations; to her father she would be exposed.

"Maybe the good in my girl may surpass all understanding," the man said, getting up, swaying uncertainly on his feet. "Maybe she'll have her mother's tenderness and bravery and unselfishness. And the call of blood—maybe the blood will call to her."

Amy felt herself fighting to preserve her whole future. In quick breaths she said:

"Your daughter is engaged to a young man of a fine and proud family in this city. She had almost given up hope of love and the full, rich life she desired. But it came. She has no family of her own—no relatives; but, at least, she has none that would—"

He took the phrase upon his own lips. "Who would disgrace her," he said bitterly.

Amy nodded.

The man was silent. He licked his dry, puckered, cold-cracked lips with the tip of his tongue. He reached for his hat.

She had won! He was going away.

"Promise me!" she said.

"I understand," he replied. "I promise. It's the little twenty-thirty lodging-houses for mine. For them it's furs and fires and a home. For me it's leaking shoes and selling soap at back doors. 'S all right. 'S all right. I promise."

"And this?" said Amy, reaching for the golden heart on the table. "This locket. I'll give that to her; it belonged to her mother."